Streamlining the present tax system

†*7. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the need to streamline the present tax system and make it more effective is being felt;

(b) if so, whether the Government are considering to do the same;

(c) if so, the main features thereof; and

(d) if not, by when it is likely to be done?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (d) Sir, streamlining the tax system and making it more effective is a continuous process. The measures taken include reduction in the multiplicity of taxes and rates, review of tax exemptions and simplification of the tax structure and tax collection procedure.

Memorandum by the trade unions for withdrawal of wage cut for the strike period

*8. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Trade Unions representing the postal employees submitted a memorandum requesting to withdraw the wage cut effected for the strike period and to adjust the 14 days strike period ending on 18th December, 2000 against leave as had been done in 1996 and 1998; and

(b) if so, the Government's decision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) Memorandum was received from the postal federations representing against imposition of wage cut for

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

postal employees and ED Agents who participated in the postal strike in December, 2000. The matter was thereafter considered carefully in consultation with the Ministry of Finance. It was found that as per provisions of Fundamental Rule 17(1), employees who remained absent from duty without any authority are not entitled to any pay and allowances for the period of such absence. It is also relevant that postal strike of December, 2000 was declared illegal by the Government as it was in contravention of provisions of Industrial Disputes Act. According to the provisions contained in FR-17A, the period of unauthorized absence during strike which is declared illegal under the Industrial disputes Act 1947 or any other law for the time being in force, shall not only debar from pay and allowances during the period of such absence but shall also be deemed to cause interruption of break in service of employees unless and other wise decided by the competent authority.

Decisions taken by the Government in respect of postal strikes in 1996 and 1998 which were not declared illegal were with specific reference to the attendent facts and circumstances. The postal strike of December, 2000 was declared illegal by the Government and the actions taken thereafter are in accordance with the long-standing provisions of Fundamental Rules relating to terms and conditions of government employees.

Impact of VRS on the working of Public Sector Banks

*9. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the staff strength in different categories of various Public Sector Banks including State Bank of India Group before the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) was introduced and after the introduction of VRS;

(b) whether it is a fact that some branches of these banks have been closed down or are understaffed after the VRS has been implemented;